

Transportation Policies

On March 4 this year I spoke in this House and used the term "crisis convergence". I said that in each of the areas I mentioned there is now a crisis or the potential for a crisis, and it is certain that in four or five years, or perhaps ten if we can postpone it that long, all the elements of crisis will converge together, to produce a crisis. Hence I used the term "crisis convergence".

To meet our difficulties, the government must produce a new, national urban policy. It should not be a piecemeal, fragmented or partial policy; it should be an all-encompassing, bold, imaginative transport policy for our cities, and we needed it yesterday, so to speak. It is certain we need it even more today.

The government cannot hide behind the classic question we have heard often: who has the jurisdictional and constitutional right in this field? Let us hear no more arguments as to whether the cities are the creatures of the provinces or if the federal government can deal directly with municipalities. These arguments are not good enough. They are but fiddling while Rome burns. Is it not ironic that city administrations are the last on the totem pole when it comes to acquiring finances, but first on the totem pole in provision of services for Canadians?

Good transportation in our cities is the underlying part of the infrastructure which can make life in our cities tolerable, which can allow Canadians to live in urban centres, or in the suburbs and travel to work. Only if you build a vast, rapid transit system in each city can people live in the suburbs and work in the city core. No matter if you talk of polycentric cities, or cities as we know them today with a central core area and outlying suburbs, rapid urban transit is necessary if the cities are to function. Indeed, what is a basic characteristic of successful cities in the world? Mr. Speaker, it is a modern, fast transit system.

Basic to this question is the government's list of priorities. As I said in the House on Monday night, the government has its priorities all screwed up. The minister said nothing to make me change my mind. If the government's priorities are what it says, it should do what it promised in the election campaign. I mentioned some of those election pledges on March 4 this year, and will repeat some of them.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made these promises on June 17, 1974. What are those pledges? I shall quote my own remarks on March 4, as reported on page 3673 of *Hansard*, as follows:

The Liberal government will pay 100 per cent of the cost of new commuter vehicles. The Liberal government will pay 25 per cent of the capital cost of all vehicles purchased. Financial support will be made available to encourage Canadian design and engineering. The Liberal government will offer assistance. Canadian industry will be encouraged to develop 'off the shelf' standardized systems and equipment. The Liberal government will encourage urban transit systems. The Liberal government is committed to removing the 12 per cent sales tax. The Liberal government will offer the best use of existing railway rights of way. The Liberal government will rapidly implement the railway relocation act.

The government calls these pledges. They are not thoughts or whimsical ideas; they are a definite commitment to action, a commitment the Prime Minister made. And what has changed

[Mr. Whiteway.]

between June 17, 1974, and the present? Why, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals won another election.

We in Canada urgently need mass, rapid transit for our cities. We must plan for the future, when 90 per cent of Canadians will live in our cities. That being so, I say those pledges are nothing but black, foul lies. Three months ago the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) was in the city of Toronto, a city which critically needs a modern rapid transit system. He announced that the \$190 million that had been promised and allocated for the development of a rapid transit system for Toronto was no longer available.

● (1700)

It is all well and good for the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) to stand in his place in this Chamber to tell us what he has accomplished. I know he works hard. I know there have been some accomplishments. I know that we do not sing the minister's praises often enough. Perhaps that gets him down. However, it is our responsibility to point out weaknesses, not to sing his praises. The minister was elected to act. His reward is that he has been elected. I hope the minister is not attempting to intimidate me from carrying out my responsibility and pointing out that nothing is being done in the area of urban transportation.

In addition, the minister has reneged on promises, pledges, and commitments. The government cannot make these kinds of retractions with little consequence. The results of this inaction and renegeing will have serious repercussions in years to come.

I ask the minister to take seriously under advisement the task of resetting the priorities of his government. He should at least put on paper and begin to act on his commitment and priority to put in place a fast modern rapid transit system in at least the three largest cities in Canada, namely, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

Why does it make sense for us in Canada to put into action a rapid transit system? First, it is obvious that half of Canada's oil and gas consumption is used for intra-city transportation. If we were to have a mass rapid transit system in our Canadian cities, by 1985 we could cut that amount by 50 per cent. In other words, we could reduce the total consumption by 25 per cent. I realize the capital cost would be in the neighbourhood of \$5 billion, but that investment would save 25 per cent of Canadian energy needs in eight to ten years. We can see the kinds of results that would have on our transfer payments, requirements of offshore oil, energy conservation, and balance of payments. It should be done if for no other reason than that it makes good economic sense.

Second, a mass rapid transit system in our Canadian cities would give us an opportunity to do something that we have already begun. We are already ahead of most of the world in our technological development of a massive rapid transit system. We have a corporation which has been doing extensive work, financed mostly by the province of Ontario, the Urban Transportation Development Corporation. We could export this technology. The world market in the next 20 years will be